



NEW LIGHT ON THE WINGMAKERS WEBSITE

Since we published the WingMakers web site extracts in NEXUS 6/03 (April-May 1999 issue), we have received numerous requests from readers for follow-up news. Up until recently we had heard nothing, but then we received the following item which sheds some light on surrounding circumstances.

— Editor

by Kerry M. Knight © May 2000

Twenty-seven years ago, mysterious artifacts were found in a remote cavern located in northern New Mexico, USA. The discovery consisted of 23 chambers hollowed out deep within a huge natural bedrock structure in a remote canyon.

A secret, unacknowledged faction of the National Security Agency (NSA), known only as the Advanced Contact Intelligence Organization (ACIO), undertook authority for the project, dubbed *Ancient Arrow*.

Recovered within the chambers were wall paintings, various alien technologies, encoded hieroglyphs and an optical disc with tracks of encoded music. To the researchers, this became known as the Extraterrestrial Time Capsule (ETC). It was determined that the time capsule was designed and built by "a future version of humankind who were adept at interactive

time travel". This advanced race called themselves "the WingMakers".

In 1997, a scientist by the name of Dr Anderson allegedly defected and reported the ACIO's findings to a journalist under the pseudonym of Anne. Since 1998, this information has been available via the World Wide Web at the website www.wingmakers.com.

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Mark Hempel, a partner and co-founder of the Minnesota-based information technology company South Bay Group, is the webmaster of the domain under copyright acquisition of 1998. Hempel is also one of the few individuals who have been in contact with an anonymous group attributed to

all WingMakers information.

Hempel's participation with WingMakers began when he was given information by a group of individuals who have maintained anonymity for various reasons—reasons that have not all been explained. His contact with this group came from a mutual acquaintance and clients working within the Department of Defense (DoD). Hempel was chosen by the group to host the site as their technical liaison, and became a tool to post the information via the Internet.

"They paid me to host the site, no questions asked," said Hempel. "When I received the original materials from the group, they included four CD-ROM discs."

The first CD was essentially the website, the second contained the music from chambers 1 to 23, and the final two discs were the photographs of the chamber paintings.

"I have never met them in person but have talked with one of them on the phone," continued Hempel. "This group is media-shy and they do not want to be known. I have been impressed with the woman I have spoken with. She's very polite, articulate and quiet. Initially she told me she was a member of an art group based in northern Europe."

The woman later dismissed her original statement as misinformation, acknowledging she was not an artist and had no dealings in the art world. Hempel was never

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told her profession. Nevertheless, he received the WingMakers package and was asked to host the site.

"I'm still being paid to monitor the site and ensure its safekeeping. The group prefers to remain anonymous, and that's fine with me."

Every month, Hempel receives a telephone call by the same woman to "check in" for updates on security problems, if any.

"There have been some attacks on the site pertaining to the interview transcripts, and some photos were misappropriated and others were added mysteriously," remarked Hempel.

There is much more content yet to be released by the group, but so far it has not been made available, other than the new music (chambers 11 to 17) and the third interview.

"I haven't been given permission to publish these on the site at this time," Hempel said.

On 24 November 1998, an alt.art.video newsgroup posting appeared on the Internet, suspected to have been written by Hempel himself. This posting claimed that he manufactured all the content and that WingMakers was in fact an experimental Immersive Multimedia Art Form (IMAF) intended as a blueprint for film or television.

When the site was launched the same month, "There was a slew of e-mails and reports about me in various newsgroups,"

Hempel said. "I did not write them. I am familiar with the IMAF e-mail, but it was not written by me."

Later that year, Hempel put copyright notice on all WingMakers artwork and music to discourage any pirating behaviour on the Internet. In reality, no "official" rights were granted.

WingMakers art and music files, along with newly released tracks from chambers

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11 to 17, eventually ended up in the hands of SoulFood Ltd music company for commercial distribution.

"There is no relationship between WingMakers and SoulFood Media," Hempel explained, "other than the fact that they were chosen by this group to distribute their music anonymously. SoulFood is the distributor of the music."

Contrary to many people's beliefs,

Hempel affirms that SoulFood did not engineer or manufacture the music itself—this stemming from the fact that Hempel's name appears on the liner notes to a CD titled *Breathe*, produced by SoulFood.

When asked to comment on the origins of the music, Hempel replied: "The origins of the music are anonymous. As I understand it, SoulFood is releasing the music for chambers 11 to 17 [not currently available on the website] in June."

While SoulFood is a commercial organisation, it operates more like a non-profit music co-op.

"I believe SoulFood was chosen because of its commitment to indigenous music forms, and its owner, Gordy Schaeffer, is somehow connected to the group behind the WingMakers website. SoulFood, as I understand it, was also given permission to use some of the artwork and music from the actual site in New Mexico."

When contacted for further information, Heidi Schaeffer of SoulFood Ltd stated: "SoulFood was given permission by Mark Hempel, the webmaster of the site, to distribute the new music and use the WingMakers art," adding, "We have also been given exclusive rights to distribute the new music."

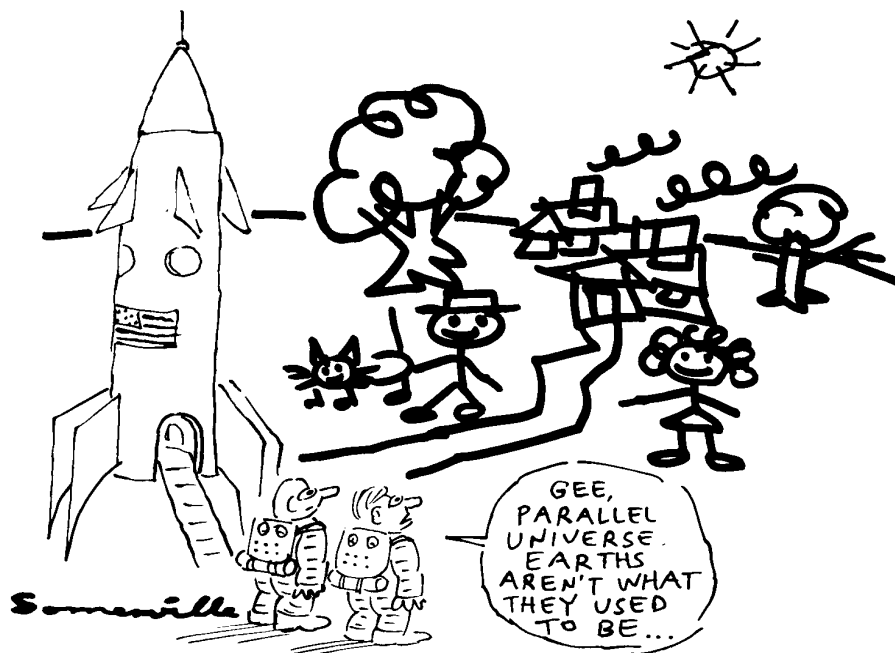
When asked about this, Hempel replied: "It's true that they needed my help to get some of the music and artwork together, but I don't look at it as 'permission'. I assume Heidi does not want to disclose anything about this group. I believe it was an agreement made between them and SoulFood."

Hempel admits to having very large files of all the artwork which he distributed to SoulFood for the WingMakers album cover, along with WingMakers music files for mastering.

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Hempel said the reason he is looked upon by the group as their technical liaison is that they prefer not to deal with media or commercial interests and feel it necessary to stay out of the global "limelight". There was no need for it, he further stated.

"They've given me everything I need to host the site, and I in turn work with their agents like SoulFood to get the material out per their direction."



However, when contacted about the company's involvement with WingMakers, Gordy Schaeffer remarked: "On one level, SoulFood has been working for three years decoding optical data and converting it into frequencies."

In fact, SoulFood had nothing to do with the optical translations. According to Hempel, the three years Schaeffer was referring to is reflective of what the group told him and not his personal time.

"The music was sent to me complete," said Hempel.

Schaeffer was tasked with mastering it for commercial purposes, production of the disc's packaging and its distribution to the market.

Hempel acknowledged the fact that Schaeffer may have been leaking misinformation on his and SoulFood's role in the WingMaker's issue. "When he [Gordy] stated 'three years', he was providing, to some degree, misinformation [as to his involvement]; simply echoing information he received from this group."

When asked for a comment, Schaeffer replied: "I have no further information."

When asked to comment on the anonymous grouping aforementioned, Schaeffer adamantly stated: "I have no further information at this time. All the people involved are remaining anonymous for various reasons."

It has become a moot point that SoulFood Ltd is extremely nervous in discussing the WingMakers topic and tends to veer away from publicly speaking about it in great detail. WingMakers is a very obscure project within SoulFood, and the company has gone to great lengths to suppress any background information being revealed to the general public.

In 1999, Hempel was told that the group is currently working on a book to explain the real situation behind WingMakers and its surrounding controversy.

"I haven't read it; I just know they are planning to put it on the website some time this summer—available for free. I also believe that some of the information on the website is misinformation as well—at least in part—because she explained that the book was meant to be the 'true rendering' of the story, though it's written in a fictional context to protect identities. I was told I'd get the first few chapters in June, and the balance in the Fall."

Many questions arise in regard to the true identity of this group and the woman

with whom Hempel has been in contact. To dismay speculation from others, Hempel said that this woman has never claimed to be the journalist Anne or a real-life facsimile of her, or to have any relation with the so-called ACIO.

"I've never actually asked her," admitted Hempel, but added: "I've worked with enough government agencies to know when to ask and when not to ask questions."

As Hempel indicated, it does not matter.

"As long as she provides me with income and manages to provide good content on her website, I'll help her while respecting her desire for anonymity."

(Source: Written by Kerry M. Knight, knightk@sentex.net, 27 May 2000)

MORE NEWS FROM THE WINGMAKERS WEBMASTER

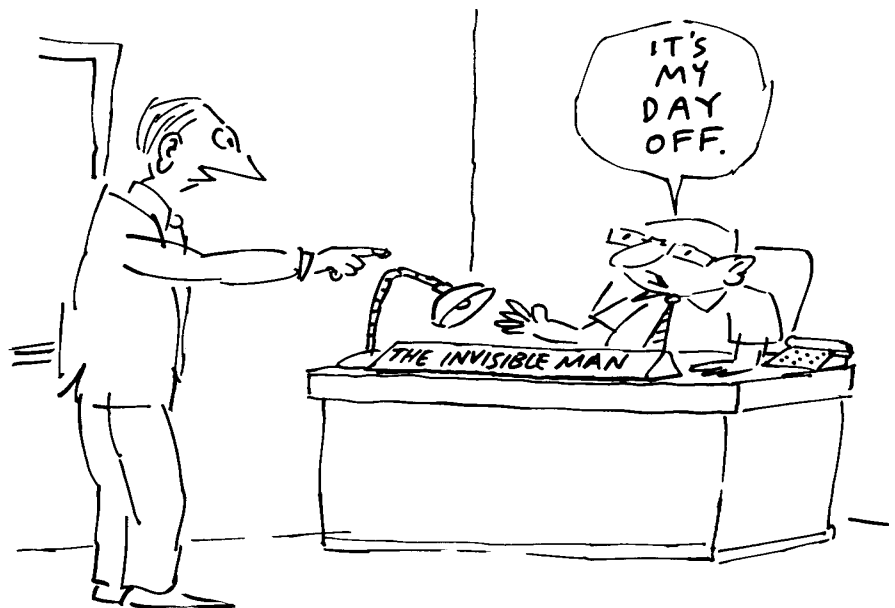
When we received Kerry Knight's item, I thought it best to contact Mark Hempel and check his understanding of the facts as presented. What follows are the e-mail communications between Mark and myself, reprinted with his permission. We'll keep you updated on further developments when we hear of them.

— Editor

3 July 2000

To: Mark Hempel, mhempel@southbaygroup.com

Dear Mark,



Somerville

I am wanting to run the following update on the WingMakers piece which we ran in an earlier edition of NEXUS.

I want to run the article by you first, as you are mentioned many times in it. Please let me know if you are happy with what is attributed to you, etc.

Look forward to your earliest reply.

Kind regards,

Duncan

(Article follows...)

3 July 2000

From: Mark Hempel

Dear Duncan,

Thanks for sending the article. I don't have any problems with its content. I can update you on a few things.

1) I have received a 1,050-page book, and have been given instructions to publish the first 250 pages on the WingMakers website in mid-July. I've read the complete book, and it's extremely interesting. It's written in a fictional context—much like a science fiction novel—and it details the discovery of the Ancient Arrow site, the ACIO and the WingMakers. It will be made available for free. I'll probably make it available in a PDF format. Should be up in about two weeks.

I'm told that there are two versions: one anonymous and one that supposedly reports the facts (names, places, etc.). I have the former version, and that's the one that will be posted on the site.

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2) With regard to the music, I'd like to add the following details. Each file/composition had between 80–100 digital sound samples that were "musically" arranged on the discs I was originally sent. In this sense, they were "complete".

These same files were given to a company called SoulFood Media to produce and distribute. A gentleman by the name of Gordy Schaeffer (the owner of SoulFood Media) produced the music files, but had to edit the files and reduce them because he couldn't layer 80 different instrumentation/vocal tracks simultaneously without muddying the music. In this process, he also arranged the music samples or "layers" with a more commercial sound.

The original files were not very commercial-sounding, though the fidelity was outstanding. I heard the files in their original state and could sense the melodies, but it wasn't until after their production that they became musical—at least by my ear's standards.

Also, I have known Gordy for about four years, before I ever got the discs or knew about the WingMakers. I referred Gordy's organization to my contact, and they essentially hired him to produce/distribute the music. Gordy was an employee of mine when I was a founder of NetRadio Network. That's how I know him.

Hope this additional information helps.
Kind regards,
Mark

3 July 2000

To: Mark Hempel

Dear Mark,

Thanks for your early reply. Any chance that I may receive a copy of the full, second version of the book? Of course, I'll understand if you are not able or allowed to provide a copy, but I can't help asking. (If it is any help, I could promise not to pass on, or reprint, anything of the book whatsoever. I have to confess, the whole WingMakers scenario to date has certainly got my vote.)

Oops, nearly forgot: how much of the update you have just sent are you happy for us to put into print?

Kind regards,
Duncan

4 July 2000

From: Mark Hempel

Dear Duncan,

I'm in possession of the full, first (anonymous) version—not the second (factual) version. I was told by my contact that there are two versions; I haven't actually read or seen the second version. The implication was that they might post the second version later, but would let circumstances dictate it. This first version is accurate (so I'm told), but the places, names, etc. have been modified somewhat...I don't know to what extent.

As far as I'm concerned, you can print anything that I've mentioned. My contact

wants as many people as possible to read this book, which is why it'll be free. I'm not sure why they're only putting up the first quarter of the book. They have always held back in letting me publish things (e.g., the other interviews). They seem to have a timeline for letting the information out.

The artwork is a good example. I wish people could see these art files up close in their full resolution. They're layered just like the music files: within each composition there are paintings within paintings that aren't discernible in the JPEG format. But again, they have specifically instructed me not to disclose the hi-res files.

I've printed two of these files in a 5,000

"...it's the only piece of art I've ever seen that quite literally 'vacuums' your consciousness out of your body when you look at it intensely enough."

DPI format and I'm convinced that they could sell thousands of these prints if they wanted to. They're unbelievable in how they move the eye around and into the composition (I'm an avid art collector). I have one of these framed in my office, and anyone who sees it wants to buy a copy. I just tell them that it's from an anonymous artist whom I don't know how to contact (which is true). The other one I have at home, and it's the only piece of art I've ever seen that quite literally "vacuums" your consciousness out of your body when you look at it intensely enough.

Anyway, whenever I ask my contact about the artwork, she simply says it's not time to release the hi-res files. So, I get the impression that everything gets released according to some prescribed timeline. Obviously, they're in no hurry.

Hope this info helps, Duncan. Oh, and to your specific question: I can't release anything—even the first version of the book—until I'm given authorization. I have a few friends who beg me from time to time and they get the same response, if it's any consolation. Sorry.

Kind regards,
Mark

(This is all the information we have at NEXUS Magazine. For further developments we suggest you visit the WingMakers website on the internet, at www.wingmakers.com. Ed.)

